

Montgomery Watt on Sirah An Analytical Study

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Professor William Montgomery Watt (1909 - 2006), was an Emeritus Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He is respected by many Muslims all over the world on the basis of his comprehensive biography of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H); *Muhammad at Mecca* (1953) and *Muhammad at Medina* (1956). Both of the works are sequel volumes, by this learned Christian Priest, on Sirah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and are considered classics in the field. Unlike the view of the other Orientlists, Professor Montgomery Watt has a moderate approach towards Sirah of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). He claims to be a neutral and unbiased writer, and to a large extent he proves it. Professor Watt seems to be in search of "a fresh view of the relation of the traditional historical material to the Qur'an". At the same time, he has a view about Qur'an as being a partial and fragmentary narrative which does not give a complete picture of Sirah and it must be used as a complementary source to the other historical materials. Therefore, he has based his research on all classical sources of Sirah, such as Ibn Hisham, At-Tabari, Al-waqidi and Ibn Saad. He has quoted Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and Musnad Ahmed, as primary sources for Ahadith, and biographical dictionaries like *Usd al-Ghabah* by Ibn Al-Athir and *al-Isabah* by Ibn Hajar, as sources of history. Whether Professor Watt stands true to his claims of neutrality or not, is a matter to be analytically viewed. At least, he tries to refrain from making the mistakes already committed by some Western writers, who became in the long run unacceptable to the Muslim readers. The reason behind the phenomena, in his view, was that those writers could not abide by their own standards of neutrality. He suggests that the Christians must adopt some attitude towards Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and that attitude ought to be based on theological principles.

Watt's Scholarship & his Religious Standpoint

William Montgomery Watt of Scotland, a Christian by faith, was a priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Having completed formal study of classical Arabic, he was appointed Arabic specialist to the Anglican Bishop (1) of Jerusalem from 1943-46. He became a member of the Ecumenical Iona Community (2) in 1960 and Chairman, Association of British Orientalists in 1964. The learned scholar was Emeritus Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He was an author of more than a dozen books on Islam (3); his main focus has been on the study of life of the

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Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), history of Islam, Islamic Philosophy and Islam- Christianity relationship.

Prof Watt has been in his long lifetime, the most important non-Muslim interpreter of Islam in the West, and the most influential scholar in the field of Islamic studies. The title of his PhD thesis was: *Freewill and Predestination in Early Islam*, which (published in 1948) reveals his interest and deep study in Islamic theology that stayed with him to the last days of his life. (4)

Watt, being a staunch believer of Christianity, believed in prophet-hood and the Biblical Prophets. The term Prophet (Greek *prophētēs*: forth teller) is used in the Old and the New Testament for the one, who moved by the Spirit of God, becomes His spokesman; solemnly declares to men what he has receives by inspiration, especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation. According to the Christian faith, a Prophet is a person who receives God's Words (revelation) and conveys it to the people. In other words, God communicates His message to humanity, through a prophet's mouth.

The Old Testament depicted a person to be a Messiah in future, who will come with final and decisive Word of God. Christianity believes that Jesus Christ was that prophet. (5) It goes without saying that Christians have never accepted Muhammad (PBUH) as a Prophet, but revered Prof Watt, as a priest holding fast to his Christian faith, viewed Prophet Muhammad as a genuine, whose revelations were divine injunctions, inspiring his followers to build up a strong edifice of faith.

Watt has been welcomed by the Muslims, as a moderate academician, on the basis of his comprehensive biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is a sequel work in two volumes namely, *Muhammad at Mecca* (1953) and *Muhammad at Medina* (1956). This scholarly work is based on a critique of the primary Islamic sources. Having studied these around five hundred pages, one is convinced that his estimation of Qur'an & the Prophet Muhammad is sound and clear, though his 'belief' remains unclear to the reader. Since Prof Watt intended to maintain his neutrality, he avoided showing his religious standpoint about the Prophet & the Qur'an. However, in an interview, he clarifies that:

"I do, however, believe that Muhammad, like the earlier prophets, had genuine religious experiences. I believe that he really

did receive something directly from God. As such, I believe that the Qur'an came from God, that it is divinely inspired. Muhammad could not have caused the great upsurge in religion that he did, without God's blessing." (6)

This shows that, Watt was very clear about his faith in Prophet Muhammad & the Qur'an, but his faith, obviously, was different from that one of the Muslims. He had a view about the revealed knowledge that, it is true always within the boundary of time and space. For example, he believed that the later writers of the Bible have made suitable changes, during the rewriting the Old Testament. About the Qur'an, to a question, he responded:

"I would be inclined to say that the Qur'an is the word of God for a particular time and place and will not therefore necessarily suit other times and places.....Traditionally Muslims have argued from God's eternity that the commands he gives are unalterable, and they have not admitted that social forms can change. I therefore do not believe that either the Bible or the Qur'an is infallibly true in the sense that all their commands are valid for all time." (7)

It means that he does not believe in eternity of Qur'an, as he does about the Bible. In addition to that, to understand the primary message of Qur'an, he depends upon theories presented by Richard Bell and Noldeke, yet he claims to avoid the theological issues and do not want to repeat the earlier attitude of non-Muslim writers. Moreover, about the honesty of the Prophet Muhammad and originality of the Qur'an he seems to be firm and clear, if one pays attention to his following statement:

"We can not with any plausibility imagine him {the prophet} inserting verses of his own composition among those which came to him from this (supernatural source independent of his consciousness (as he believed))".(8)

About the attitude of Islam towards Judaism and Christianity, Watt observes, "It is interesting to ask why Muhammad did not become a Christian." In his opinion, if Prophet Muhammad was concerned with the moral, religious & social malaise of his time, he should have become a Christian or a Jew. "Why did he not do this?".... "He originally regarded the monotheism which he believed and preached as identical with the existing Jewish and Christian monotheism." (9) Therefore, in the beginning, he hoped Jews and Christians may accept him. But as

the time passed, due to many religious & political implications, Judaism, Christianity and Islam became different and to some extent, opposite religions.

His Treatment of the sources & thematic basis of the Biography

Unlike the view of the other Orientalists, Professor Watt has a moderate approach towards Sirah of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). He claims to be a neutral and unbiased writer. Whether he stands true to his claims of neutrality or not is a matter to be analytically viewed. At least, he tries to refrain from making the mistakes already committed by some western writers, who became in the long run unacceptable to the Muslim readers.

The reason behind the phenomena, in his view was that, those writers could not abide by their own standards of neutrality. He suggests that the Christians must adopt some attitude towards Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and that attitude ought to be based on theological principles. He observes that “The need for a fresh life of Muhammad has been felt for some time by students of Islam, especially the more historically minded”, which becomes the rationale of writing a biography, like his.

We know that Prof Watt published later, *Muhammad-Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford University Press-1961) an abridgement of *Muhammad at Mecca* and *Muhammad at Medina*, and he himself followed to a larger extent the same principles. It is viewed as a presentation, in a chronological order; covering the same ground in a different manner, introducing the prophet with, middle position between the over critical attitude of earlier Western writers and uncritical views of some Muslim writers with the skepticism of Western writers regretted.

He has pointed out the weakness in the Western method of gathering information of Sirah by Ibn Ishaq, and secondly that they have failed to distinguish between Sirah and Hadith. About his own careful treatment of the classic sources, he says:

“I have proceeded on the view that the traditional accounts are in general to be accepted, are to be received with care and as far as possible corrected where ‘tendential shaping’ is suspected, and are only to be rejected outright where there is internal contradiction.” (10)

If we analyze his method of treating the sources, Professor Watt has been searching “a fresh view of the relation of the traditional historical material to the Quran”. At the same time he

has a view about Quran as being a partial and fragmentary narrative, which does not give a complete picture of Sirah and it must be used as a complementary source to the other historical materials.

The other reason for this selectivity, as he explains is that:

“The Qur’an presents mainly the ideological aspect of great complex of changes which took place in and around Mecca, but the Economic, social and political aspects must also be considered if we are to have a balanced picture and indeed if we are to understand properly the ideological aspect itself”. (11)

It means that Professor Watt gives unprecedented importance to the economic, social and political aspects of the era in evolution of the events during period of the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H) life. The very first chapter starts with “The Economic Basis”. To explain the thematic basis of his work, he says that:

“The special feature of this biography of Muhammad is thus not that it combs available sources more minutely but that it pays fuller attention to these material factors, and attempts to answer many questions that have already been hardly raised in the past.” (12)

This attitude gives a new angle to study Sirah of the Prophet and it naturally coincides with the modern anthropological concerns, which reasonably focus the economic & political motives in any social change in human societies. Prof Watt seems to be a trend setter in the modern Sirah studies, in this regard. Here lies very important point; one who thinks that all changes were basically economy oriented will assume that ideological background is less important, on the other hand one who thinks that prophetic endeavor was based on an ideology guided by Qur’an itself, will give secondary importance to socio-economic motives. It is clear, from a very close reading of his work that, our learned author belongs to former school of thought.

Positive Image of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with a grain of salt

The most important characteristic of Watt’s scholarship is his just depiction of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)’s personality and character. He is the second main pillar of the shift in the negative attitude towards Prophet of Islam, by the earlier biased Western writers. The first torch-bearer of this positive change was Thomas Carlyle. He wrote on his hallmark topic of Prophet as

hero, and was convinced to select Prophet Muhammad as role model in this regard. He declared:

“The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves.....Such a man is what we call an original man; he comes to us at first hand. A messenger he, sent from the Infinite Unknown with the tidings to us. We may call him Poet, Prophet, God; - in one way or other, we all feel that the words he utters are as no other man's words. Direct from the Inner Fact of things...Really his utterances are they not a kind of 'revelation'; - what we must call such for want of some other name...God has made many revelations: but this man too, has not God made him, the latest and newest of all! .” (13)

Following on, from such positive analysis about Prophet Muhammad, Watt announces his own estimate of Muhammad's status, rejecting all evil attacks on the prophet, by presenting rationale of his opinion:

“It is incredible that a person subject to epilepsy, or hysteria, or even ungovernable fits of emotion, could have been the active leader of military expeditions, or the cool far-seeing guide of city-state and a growing religious community; but all this we know Muhammad to have been.” (14)

After examining the whole Sirah critically, Prof Montgomery Watt admits in his conclusions:

“In his day and generation Muhammad was a social reformer, indeed a reformer even in the sphere of morals. He created a new system of social security and a new family structure, both of which were a vast improvement on what went before. In this way he adapted for settled communities all that was best in the morality of the nomad, and established a religious and a social framework for the life of a sixth of the human race today. That is not the work of a traitor or a lecher.” (15)

This value judgment shows that Watt is clearly convinced about prophet's integrity and contribution but sometimes, he unclearly clarifies the charges placed against the prophet by the Western writers. Take the example of his opinion about the accusations of being imposter, rather than clearly denying and proving it false through arguments, he says that this kind of accusation “raises more problems than it solves”. A neutral writer and honest researcher must not be so hesitant, to prove or to

disapprove such a big stigma, when the facts are so vivid. But the tragedy is that he gives an ambiguous statement on such occasion:

“Theories of Western authors which presuppose his insincerity will not be discussed as theories, though arguments against his sincerity will have to be considered.” (16)

Same is the case with some of the meanings or explanations of important terminology. (17) He rightly says that the Prophet’s “true visions” (ar-ru’ya *sadiqah*) were quite distinct from dreams but when he talks about Tahannuth (devotional exercises) of the Prophet, in the cave of Hira’ before prophet-hood, he gives it a strange meaning. He deduces that this practice of Prophet might have been adopted actually, to escape the extremely hot sunlight in the desert. He elaborates the state of mind of the prophet after first revelation, with sound phraseology but opines that the Prophet’s fear at that time was due to feeling of divine presence, which was leading him to despair, even to the extent that he thought of suicide.

This is very strange to imagine that a staunch believer of Christianity thinks so. A prophet of God would feel despair enough even to the extent of suicide, in the cherished feeling of presence of God! Moreover, the period of Fatrah, according to Prof Watt is preparatory period for next revelation and the translation of word Wahy, used on the occasion of prophet’s ascension was ‘suggestion’ (to the prophet by God), in his opinion.

Same is the case of Prophet’s position at Medina. Prof Watt accepts Prophet as leader of the Ummah (based on Islamic brotherhood) but with a grain of salt, as he says it was a customary in Arabia to have a chief like that. (18) Contrary to the other Western writers, to Watt’s estimation the Prophet was nothing more than ‘a clan chief’. Again explaining the success of Prophet after Hijrah, Prof Watt remains on the same page, and depicts a manifestation of thematic outline of his own assumptions, that all successes were owing to the economic incentives involved in this regard:

“It was doubtless love for booty that made many men come to Medina and attach themselves to Muhammad”. (19)

What a pity that Prof Watt has assumed that the masses embracing Islam had thought it a source of income. What a Carl Marx’s “Economic Man” (20) can think more than that!

Watt's style of writing showing skepticism

Prof Watt says that his work addresses “first and foremost to the historian”, and has been written with an academic attitude, strictly observing the standards of “Western historical scholarship.” According to his statement, he has “to say nothing that would entail the rejection of any of the fundamental doctrines of Islam.” The western writers have not been faithful to their own principle, and “even from historical point of view their conclusions required to be revised”. Since their analysis imply a rejection of Muslim theological doctrines “the Western studies in the Qur'an have often been unfortunate.” Therefore, he has preserved neutrality as he claims:

“For example, in order to avoid deciding whether the Qur'an is or is not the Word of God, I have refrained from using the expressions ‘God says’ and ‘Muhammad says’ when referring to the Qur'an, and have simply said ‘the Qur'an says’.” (21)

These are very important statements, which define his approach towards the subject and the methodology he intends to adopt. Even not being skeptic, one will say that the revered author should qualify the phrase “Western historical scholarship”, other wise it may be misleading. If he means a just, neutral and academic study of the subject, then it is very clear and justified. But, if he points to the traditional Orientalist scholarship, then it is something problematic.

Every reader of the Orientalist study of the Prophet Muhammad & the Qur'an knows it clearly, that it was a hate oriented negative propaganda literature, in the name of objective historical analysis. Majority of the Western Christian historians have been maligning the Prophet, unscrupulously. The learned Prof Watt is an eye witness to it, that's why he himself justly harbingers a well desired change in this attitude, by writing this biography. But it is very unfortunate that the dust is not settled as it seems to be; there is a very strong wave of skepticism about the Prophet which runs through the writings of Prof Watt himself.

His skepticism about the sources is very much clear. As a historian with a critical approach, he is justified to give his value judgments, but when he uses expressions showing incredulity, doubt and uncertainty, the reader is pushed to a chaos. He uses phrases and expressions, which are not neutral in nature; rather

they carry a hidden message of suspicion and doubt about the historical facts.

Doubt – creating expressions are a stylistic phenomenon, which appears in the whole biography time and again, referring to different incidents of both Makki & Madni periods of Prophet's life, respectively. On one side, he doubts the chronology of the Meccan period (22), on the other, he makes "Muhammad's triumphant entry into Mecca" doubtful, with the comments that "There is a ground for doubting the sources in this topic....."(23) He admits Islam became a universal religion after establishing a state at Medina, but about the foreign peace policy of the Prophet, he confuses the issue with the statement like: "the examination shows that the reports of the embassies to the various sovereign are full of inconsistencies". (24)

Prof Watt has defended Prophet's position in some incorrectly scandalized incidents of his life by the Western writers; for example, Prophet's marriages. On the other side we see his becoming skeptical in some clear matters. According to Watt, the great expedition to Mu'tah is not merely part of a mysterious "northern policy" ... "but is in itself mysterious". It shows his presupposed hypothesis. He seems to believe some other Western colleagues (25) rather than depending upon the Arab historians.

He has not mentioned the act of assassination of Prophet's envoy in this regard, and mistrusted sources of Islamic history, to create doubts about the Prophet (PBUH). He introduces a superstition that the Prophet was "intensely interested" in the northern rout. With out presenting any argument or proof, he smells prophet's interest. Moreover, he claims that the sources are silent in this regard. This is against the reported facts, as a matter of fact, the sources are silent about "northern policy" itself.

Like expedition of Mu'tah, there is other point where he looks beyond what he sees. That is Dhat Atlah, in which 15 Muslims were done to death. Without any evidence, he calls fifteen Muslims "raiders". The sources confirm that it was a preaching mission, but Watt digs out of it, a conspiracy and concludes: "we may be certain that they were carrying out part of some far-reaching plan". What was this plan? He himself is silent. Was it a writer's plan to create doubts only?

Prof Watt is of the opinion, that the story of Mu'tah has been greatly manipulated in transmission and the chief source of

confusion has been the desire to vilify Khalid b. Al- Walid. Prof Zafar Ali Qureshi in his scholarly analytical work Prophet Muhammad and His Western Critics raises apt inquiry:

“As far as we can make out there is nothing of material importance in any of the works of Arab historians on the subject of this expedition which could be construed as casting an adverse reflection on Khalid Ibn al-Walid to warrant substantiation of the charge against these authors of their desire to “vilify” Khalid, or to “denigrate” him as made out by Dr Watt.” (26)

Prof Watt claims that he avoids interfering to theological questions of Muslim belief. He says and we quote that “For example, in order to avoid deciding whether the Qur’an is or is not the Word of God, I have refrained from using the expressions ‘God says’....It means that he does not want to show his own concept of Qur’an here, as a policy. But being a neutral researcher, he should at this point, explain Muslim’s belief about Qur’an of being word of God. Failing which, his statement may be taken as interference to a basic theological sphere of belief.

It is clear that Wahy, or Revelation as it is translated, is a very much theological belief upon which even the whole theology focuses. If he tries to avoid theological questions, why should he prefer the interpretation given by Richard Bell? He translates Wahy into “suggestion”, “prompting” or “inspiration”. He should have gone to the literal meaning of the word or to the consensus interpretation of the Muslim thought, given by Qur’an and Sunnah.

Rather, he resorts to Taweel (desired interpretation) in this regard, as he has done in the case of the word Iqra (recite). Entering again, into the core theological area he says it is almost certain that the later traditionalist avoided the natural meaning of these words in order to find support for the dogma, that Muhammad could not write which was an important part of the proof of the miraculous nature of Qur’an.

He should know that it is not something concocted afterwards, rather it is the very basic concept elaborated by Qur’an itself, for more than one time: For Example see al-A’raf7:157, 158; “...So believe in Allah and His Messenger(Muhammad) the prophet who can neither read nor write...”, and see al-‘Ankabut29:48 “Neither did you (O Muhammad) read any book before this (Qur’an) nor did you write any book with your right hand...”. And hence there is no ground to doubt and malign

Muslim theologians, (27) with the false blame of introducing new dogma in Islamic belief. Moreover, the historical circumstantial evidences prove that Prophet could not read or write.

There is other example of Watt's entrance into theological question, where he doubts Muhammad's universal Prophetic status:

"To begin with, Muhammad thought of himself as sent to his own tribe (qawm), which presumably means Quraysh; but gradually, by steps which are not clearly marked in the Qur'an, he came to see his mission as a wider one." (28)

This concept is historically wrong, possibly derived from Surah al-Shu'ra26:214 ("And warn your tribe (O Muhammad) of near kindred"). But the Qur'an had clearly marked the fact in Surah al-A'raf7:158 "Say (O Muhammad) 'O Mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the messenger of Allah _ to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth.'" Remember that Surah Al-A'raf is a Makki Surah by consensus. Moreover, the efforts of the Prophet to convey Islam to all Arabs is very much clear. Every student of history knows the facts like Prophet's preaching during Hajj occasions, his visit to Taif and afterwards the covenant with Medinites (Ba'ah al-Aaqaba). They all stand for Prophet's consciousness about his status of being Prophet to all. Everybody knows that all of these incidents took place during Prophet's stay at Makkah.

The last example, for the time being, but not the least in this regard, that we can discuss is Watt's misconception about "Muhammad's Attempts to Reconcile the Jews". He assumed first that the Prophet Muhammad was making efforts, since "early in his career", afterwards he propounds a theory:

"Especially after it seemed likely that he would go to Medina Muhammad appears to have tried to model Islam on the older religions." (29)

The assumption is not bad, but the arguments in the form of some historical evidences presented by Watt, badly fail to prove the theory. He gives examples of Warqa Bin Nawfal episode, Ashura Fast, Friday prayers, Qiblah issues and others to prove that Prophet was keen to assimilate to Judaism. As a matter of fact, the same events negate his theory, in reality. Prof Watt contradicts himself, when he points out the "Intellectual & Physical attacks" of

Islam on Jews. (30) Obviously, the Qur'an exposes Jews in Madni Surah al-Baqarah; declares them ungrateful to Allah and clarifies that they had deviated the right path and thus Qur'an suggests the Prophet to shun off the old Qiblah and modify the culture of the Arabs into a new civilization.

It does not mean that the Prophet was not in favor of reconciliation at all; he undoubtedly was in favor of respectable agreements which he concluded, with all tribes and religious communities. The best example in this regard is Medina Pact, but unfortunately Prof Watt has not paid heed to it.

What is misconception of Prof Watt in my opinion is the theory that the Prophet wanted to model Islam on older religions. No doubt there are some common principles & values all Semitic religions share, but Islam not only, parted ways with older religions, but also challenged some of their basic beliefs, as they had been culturally molded and considerably changed from their original roots. That is why they opposed the Prophet and his message. So there is no question of modeling Islam on older religions. In fact, Qur'an rebuilt the basis of religion and the Prophet established an effective new edifice of revealed religion Islam, which was original in its roots and universally applicable in its nature.

Conclusion

No doubt Professor Montgomery Watt's sequel works on Sirah are extra ordinary achievement. The hypothesis upon which his valuable effort is based is historic; the critical analysis of classic sources is matchless and the hard work of revered great priest is priceless. It is nearly impossible to present such a well-knit, organized, authentic material in reasonably short volumes.

He has left no stone unturned to reach reality as he believed. Admitting that no human work can be without weaknesses, it is very difficult to find fault with it for a Muslim scholar who is un-biased or for a non-Muslim scholar even who is biased against Islam.

There are some points, one finds against Muslim perceptions derived from the same facts of history (for example the concept about status of the Prophet, the purpose of Ghazwat and expeditions), some are contradictory to Watt's own principles (for example the discussions interfering theological beliefs like revelation, prophet-hood and Qur'an), and quit a few are below the

standards of sound scholarship (for example the expressions creating doubts and skepticism).

As a believer of Islam and faithful lover of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), one will gather some points which undermine the Prophet's character & contribution, but one should give Prof Watt the allowance of being a scholar priest of a religion, that has a longstanding bitter conflict with Islam.

One can conclude that Prof Watt's work is not only a history but an analysis of history, and it is not only a biography but an analytical commentary on Prophet's biography. In short, Prof Watt stands head and shoulder above as an exception to the long chain of biased Western biographers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Notes & References

1. Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem is based at St. George's Cathedral, in Jerusalem. The area of supervision, under the Bishop of Jerusalem includes Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The word Anglican originates from a Medieval Latin phrase dating to at least 1246 meaning the English Church.
2. The Scottish Episcopal Church has been established since the 17th century. It is distinct from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as a member church of the Anglican Communion; it works under the primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury (The senior Bishop and principle leader of the English Church.) Ecumenical Iona Community was founded in 1938 for of men and women from different walks of life and different traditions in the Christian church, on the island of Iona. Its headquarters are in Glasgow, Scotland.
3. The list of some as follows:
 Muhammad at Mecca (1953), Muhammad at Medina (1956)
 Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman (1961) (an abridgement of the above two major works)
 Islamic Philosophy and Theology (1962)
 Islamic Surveys: The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe (1972)
 The Majesty That Was Islam (1976)
 Islamic Fundamentalism & Modernity (1990)

Muslim-Christian Encounters: Perceptions and Misperceptions
(1991)

History of Islamic Spain (1996), Islamic Political Thought (1998)
Islam and the Integration of Society (1998)

4. For details see article by Professor Carole Hillenbrand on
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/professor-w-montgomery-watt>,
Retrieved on 15/02/2011
5. For detailed biblical references see: The Bible Almanac
edited by James I. Packer & others, Thomas Nelson
Publishers USA, 1980, p: 522-23
Blue Letter Bible, 1996-2011,
< [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon)

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/479082/prophecy>,
Retrieved on 27 Feb 2011
- 6-7. For further details see: Interview of William Montgomery
Watt by Bashir Maan &
Alastair
McIntosh
http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/2000_watt.htm,
Retrieved on
27 Feb, 2011
8. W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, Oxford
University Press, 1953, p: 53.
Further he suggests to his Western colleagues that:
Courtesy and an eirenic outlook certainly now demand that
we should not speak of
the Qur'an as the product of Muhammad's conscious mind,
but I hold that the same
demand is also made by sound scholarship." (Introduction to
the Qur'an, Edinburgh
University Press, 1970, p:vi)
9. W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina, Oxford
University Press, 1956, p: 315,316
10. Muhammad at Mecca, p: xiv
11. Ibid, p: xv. Here he seems to follow Marxist theory about
human societies. Karl Marx (1818-83) argued that all social
changes were the products of economic realities. To these

realities he ascribed religious beliefs, legal systems and cultural expression. Marx emphasized that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their social being, but the other way about.

12. Ibid, p: x

13. Thomas Carlyle, *On Hero-worship, & The Heroic in History*, University of California Press, 1993, p: 38, 40

Carlyle (1795 – 1881) was a Scottish writer, essayist, historian and teacher during the Victorian era. His belief in the importance of heroic leadership found form in his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. He has compared a wide range of heroes, ranging from the field of Religion through to literature and politics. He accorded Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) a special place in the book under the chapter "Hero as a Prophet". Carlyle has declared his passionate admiration of Muhammad (PBUH), analyzing how one man single-handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less than two decades.

14. Watt & Richard Bell, *Introduction to The Qur'an*, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, p: 18

Further in his *Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman*, Watt asks "Was Muhammad a prophet?", and answers it by pointing out that: "he was a man in whom creative imagination worked at deep levels and produced ideas relevant to the central questions of human existence, so that his religion has had a widespread appeal, not only in his own age but in succeeding centuries. Not all the ideas he proclaimed are true and sound but God's grace has been enabled to provide millions of men with a better religion than they had before they testified that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is his messenger". (p: 240)

15. *Muhammad at Medina*, p: 332

16. *Muhammad at Mecca*, p: 52. But in the same book, in the very beginning, about these Western scholars, he writes: "...the scholars have not been always faithful to their own principles of scholarship and that, even from the purely historical point of view, their conclusion requires to be revised." (p: x)

17. Ibid, p:40-50,55

18. Muhammad at Medina, p: 229, 238, 264, and 265. For the other Western writers the formation Ummah was a way to peace, unity and brother-hood. For Example Prof Margoliouth concludes: "Hence it may be said that the invention of an Islamic brotherhood secured a certain degree of peace among the Arab tribes. On the sanctity of that brotherhood the Prophet never ceased to insist." (D. S. Margoliouth, Muhammed and the Rise of Islam, New York, 1905, p: 446,447
19. Muhammad at Medina, p: 145
20. First coined in the late 19th century, John Stuart Mill (1806-73), the term 'Economic Man' is used by the Western Classic Economists, to refer to a hypothetical individual who acts with complete knowledge, but entirely out of self-interest and personal utility. Karl Marx (1818-83) argued that all ideologies were the products of social and economic realities. To these realities he ascribed religious beliefs, legal systems and cultural expression. Marx emphasized that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their social being, but the other way about.
21. Muhammad at Mecca, p: x
22. Ibid, p: 58
23. Muhammad at Medina, p: 55
24. Ibid, p: 41
25. For his detailed comments see: Muhammad at Medina, p: 52, 53, and 54. Regarding Mu'tah, other Orientalists have their own story but with in their own stories they have contradicted the same accusation. For example Carl Brockleman thinks that it was Prophet's underestimation of Byzantium Empire that he attacked it. But he forgot that he himself has written, in the same book: "In 629 a Messenger he (The Prophet) had sent to the commander of the fortress of Bosra, Transjordan, had been intercepted and executed. To avenge this, the Prophet sent an army of three thousand men under his foster-son Zayed-ibn-Harithah northward in September." (History of the Islamic Peoples (Tr: J Carmichael & Moshe Pelmann) Routledge, London, 1949, p:30 and 49) Also see: Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, Macmillan, 1970, p: 147

26. Zafar Ali Qureshi, *Prophet Muhammad and His Western Critics*, Idara Ma'arif Islami, Lahore, 1992, vol. 1, p: 30, 31
27. Even the famous historian Carlyle writes: "One other circumstance we not forget: that he (the Prophet) had no school learning; of the thing we call school learning none at all. The art of writing was but just introduced into Arabia; it seems to be true opinion that Mahomet never could write." (*On Hero-worship, & The Heroic in History*, p: 45, 46)
28. Muhammad at Medina, p: 143
29. Ibid, p: 198, On the other hand, the opinion of a very important Orientalist historian, Philip K. Hitti is quit contrary, he writes: "In this Madines period the Arabianization, the Nationalization, of Islam was effected. The new prophet broke off with both Judaism and Christianity; Friday was substituted for Sabbath, the Adhan (call from the minarets) was decreed in place of trumpets and gongs, Ramadan was fixed as a month of fasting, the qiblah (the direction to be observed during the ritual prayer) was changed from Jerusalem to Makkah, the pilgrimage to al-Ka'bah was authorized and the kissing of the Black Stone- a pre Islamic fetish- sanctioned. (History of the Arabs, Macmillan – 1970, p: 118)
30. Ibid, p: 204,208